

underscored material = new
[bracketed material] = delete

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

SENATE MEMORIAL 85

49TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2009

INTRODUCED BY

Linda M. Lopez

A MEMORIAL

HONORING VICTORIA CHAVEZ, GINA MICHELLE VALDEZ, CINNAMON ELKS
AND THE TEN "JANE DOES" OF THE WEST MESA MASS GRAVE.

WHEREAS, the Albuquerque police department has unearthed
the remains of thirteen individuals buried in an apparent mass
grave on the west mesa of Albuquerque, and the police and
sheriff consider the site to be a developing crime scene and
believe that most of the remains belong to women who were
buried there by the same individual or individuals; and

WHEREAS, Victoria Chavez, who was last seen in 2003 and
reported missing in 2004, was the first woman whose remains
were identified by police; Gina Michelle Valdez, who had been
missing since September 2004, was the second woman whose
remains were identified by police; and, most recently, the
remains of Cinnamon Elks, who had also been missing since 2004,

underscored material = new
[bracketed material] = delete

1 were identified by police; and

2 WHEREAS, the Albuquerque police department has compiled a
3 list of women who have been reported missing, which includes
4 Darlene Maria Trujillo, missing since 2001; Sonia Bernadette
5 Lente, missing since 2002; Monica Diana Candelaria, missing
6 since 2003; Jamie Barela, missing since 2004; Virginia Ann
7 Cloven, missing since 2004; Doreen Márquez, missing since 2004;
8 Julie Cyndie Nieto, missing since 2004; Anselma Guerra, missing
9 since 2004; Evelyn Jesúsmaria Salazar, missing since 2004;
10 Veronica Romero, missing since 2004; Anna Vigil, missing since
11 2005; Shawntell Waites, missing since 2005; Nina Herron,
12 missing since 2005; Felipa Gonzales, missing since 2005; and
13 Leah Rachelle Peebles, missing since 2006; and

14 WHEREAS, families of missing women from across New Mexico
15 file missing persons reports with police, to no avail, and
16 these families continue to search, in agony and without
17 support, for their loved ones; and

18 WHEREAS, according to the federal bureau of
19 investigation's national crime information center, there were
20 fifty thousand nine hundred thirty active adult missing persons
21 cases reported in the United States as of January 2007; and

22 WHEREAS, the women whose remains have been identified in
23 the west mesa mass grave site have been depicted by both the
24 police and many members of the media not as victims of violence
25 and crime, but rather as criminals themselves; and

.178524.2

underscored material = new
[bracketed material] = delete

1 WHEREAS, the labeling of these victims creates an
2 atmosphere of ambivalence with regard to the crimes that have
3 been perpetrated against them, while also denying their
4 humanity and their role in our communities as daughters,
5 mothers, sisters, cousins, nieces and granddaughters; and

6 WHEREAS, the deceased and missing women of New Mexico
7 deserve diligence and respect under the law and in our public
8 discourse, while their families deserve the right to carry
9 their memories with dignity; and

10 WHEREAS, communities across New Mexico are seeking further
11 details and a more thorough explanation of the Albuquerque
12 police department's and the federal bureau of investigation's
13 treatment of the crime committed against these women, in
14 relation to the collection of evidence at the mass grave and in
15 relation to the methods that were used to determine the facts
16 of the disappearances; and

17 WHEREAS, New Mexico has the second-highest rate of women
18 living in poverty and the third-highest domestic violence rate
19 in the United States, and thousands of New Mexican women are
20 not safe in their own homes, in their intimate relationships or
21 in public spaces, and they lack the resources they need to
22 escape the cycle of violence that traps them;

23 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE
24 OF NEW MEXICO that, in recognition of the heinous crimes that
25 have been perpetrated against Victoria Chavez, Gina Michelle

.178524.2

underscoring material = new
[bracketed material] = delete

1 Valdez, Cinnamon Elks and the ten other "Jane Does" of the west
2 mesa mass grave and in recognition of the missing women of New
3 Mexico whose loss continues to be felt in communities across
4 the state, the Albuquerque police department and the Bernalillo
5 county sheriff's department be urged to proceed with due
6 diligence in resolving these murders; and

7 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the mayor of Albuquerque and
8 the members of the Bernalillo county commission join in the
9 effort proposed by this resolution to ensure that these crimes
10 are thoroughly investigated and that the resources of the
11 federal bureau of investigation, the Albuquerque police
12 department and the Bernalillo county sheriff's department be
13 employed in the most expeditious manner possible; and

14 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the media change its focus
15 from an emphasis on the victims' characters and lifestyles to
16 the provision of details of the heinous crimes that resulted in
17 the mass grave on the west mesa of Albuquerque; and

18 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the state of New Mexico ensure
19 that services be available for addiction treatment and
20 rehabilitation for women in need of such services and that
21 state policy and funding be directed toward providing those
22 services to the women who need them rather than toward the
23 criminalization and incarceration of those women; and

24 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that all New Mexicans be encouraged
25 to show their support for women who are victims of violence or

.178524.2

underscored material = new
[~~bracketed material~~] = delete

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

who are missing and for their families; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the mayor of Albuquerque, the chair of the Bernalillo county commission, the chief of the Albuquerque police department and the Bernalillo county sheriff.